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ABSTRACT

This book examines dramatic interactions between a 3-year-old Inuit girl and the adults in her world. In these playful yet emotionally charged dramas, Inuit adults enact with children the plots that drive Inuit social life; they test, act out problems, entertain themselves, and create children who think and feel like an Inuit. The child, Chubby Maata, lived with her family in a seminomadic Inuit community on Baffin Island (Northwest Territories, Canada). Chapters analyze dramatic adult-child interactions, sometimes extended, in which Chubby Maata had to face one or several emotionally powerful issues and find ways to deal with them. The chapters are ordered in a logical chronology of development, each issue laying the conceptual groundwork for others, and focus on "babyness" (celebrating it while gradually dislodging the child from her baby stance); issues of belonging, possession, and attachment; whom one likes and how the liking should be expressed; the dilemma of interpersonal fear and attraction, and how one manages such ambivalence; and practicing persuasion. The conclusion discusses the processes through which culture may be organized and created in the minds of its participants. Appendices present additional dramatic episodes, a chronology, and an Inuktitut glossary. (Contains 87 references and extensive notes.) (SV)

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